

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please change the paragraph on page 6, line 19 bridging page 7, line 11 as follows:

As can be appreciated, removal of the strip 16a will form a pair of opposed edge protectors 16c, 16d as an integral extruded member which covers the lateral edges of the metal ribbon stock 10. That is, the removal of the strip 16a to expose the lower surface of ribbon 10 will provide the generally U-shaped edge protectors 16c, 16d which are joined integrally one to another along the upper surface of the ribbon 10. As such, the sleeve and the edge protectors 16c, 16d do not need to be installed during a separate operation. As noted previously, the knurled edges 10a of the ribbon 10 present a roughed surface to the edge protectors 16c, 16d thereby anchoring the ribbon 10 thereto. However, if desired, an adhesive may be alternatively or additionally be applied to the edges 10a of the ribbon stock 10 prior to being drawn through the cross-head die 12a so that the resulting edge protectors 16c, 16d remain physically in place during handling. Also, in the embodiment depicted in FIGURES 2 and 3 wherein only strip 16a is removed, there will also exist generally triangular sleeve remnants 16-2 integrally attached at their bases to the sleeve. Such remnants 16-2 will thus extend downwardly through the hole remaining in the ribbon 10 by virtue of the nails 10-1 being formed in the coining/punching operation 32 ~~and thereby also assist to minimize lateral slippage of the sleeve relative to the ribbon 10.~~